

## **PROCEEDINGS OF THE HISTORIC CONSERVATION BOARD**

**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2003**

**3:00 P.M., J. MARTIN GRIESEL ROOM, CENTENNIAL PLAZA II**

The Historic Conservation Board met at 3:00 P.M., in the J. Martin Griesel Room, Centennial Plaza II, with members Kirk, Kreider, Raser, Senhauser, Spraul-Schmidt, Sullebarger, and Wallace present. Absent: Bloomfield

### **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Monday, September 22, 2003 meeting were unanimously approved (motion by Raser, second by Sullebarger).

The minutes of the Monday, October 6, 2003 meeting were unanimously approved (motion by Sullebarger, second by Raser).

### **CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 1427-1429 MAIN STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a rear addition, balcony, and rooftop penthouse on the building at 1427-1429 Main Street, a contributing resource to the Over-the-Rhine Historic District.

Ms. Cowden explained that the applicant, John Spencer, is proposing to develop the property into six condominiums, retaining the first floor commercial space, which is currently occupied by the Main City Bar. The proposed work would provide additional living space for four of the six condominiums. The penthouse and addition are proposed to be clad with an interlocking metal shingle in a terra cotta color, which will blend with the color of the building.

Only the applicant attended the pre-hearing conference. Staff received a letter in support of the project from Chris Frutkin of Center City Properties.

Ms. Cowden stated that the proposal meets the intent of the Over-the-Rhine Historic District Guidelines. The one story addition, decks and penthouse will not overpower the buildings, although they will be visible from Melindy and Clay Streets, and partially visible from Main Street. While the metal shingles are modern, the guidelines state that metal is an important material in the district. Staff believes the shingles will be compatible with the building and the overall historic district, as well as differentiate the new addition from the original building and earlier addition.

The proposal also effectuates the goals of the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, which include encouraging the development of homeownership opportunities in the neighborhood through the rehabilitation of existing buildings and new construction.

### **BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Raser, second by Spraul-Schmidt) to find that the proposed addition and penthouse meet the Over-the-Rhine Historic District Guidelines and to approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of the proposed addition and penthouse with the condition that final construction drawings be submitted to the Urban Conservator for approval prior to construction.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS, 652 MAIN STREET, OVER-THE-  
RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Adrienne Cowden presented the staff report on this application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the installation of a new wall sign at 652 Main Street. The building is located in the Downtown Development District and is a contributing resource in the Main Street Historic District.

Ms. Cowden stated that the proposed signage has internally illuminated white letters reading "H&R BLOCK" on a black background with a vibrant green square. The sign, measuring 2' x 8' x 5" wide, will be centered on the storefront lintel above the entry.

Ms. Cowden explained that the Main Street Historic District Guidelines stipulate that standardized internally illuminated signs are prohibited. She stated that although the sign is internally illuminated, it should not be considered a standardized sign. It has been specifically scaled to fit the storefront, taking into account the building's location and size, and identifies the business. The placement of the sign is appropriate and does not cover any significant architectural features of the building. In addition, the sign meets the zoning requirements for a wall sign in the Downtown Development District.

Bob Carpenter of Carpenter Sign Service was present to respond to questions from the Board. Mr. Carpenter explained that the drawing in the staff report does not show the sign to scale, but it is shown to scale in the photographs. He replied to Mr. Raser that it is connected to an electrical source from within the building and the transformer would be enclosed within the 5" wide sign.

Mr. Raser suggested lowering the sign to the level of the glass spandrels since the character of the building would be better retained. Mr. Carpenter indicated he could redesign the sign to fit exactly within one of the glass spandrels, but noted that the size of the sign would change to be approximately 3' x 6'. Ms. Sullebarger disagreed, pointing out that traditionally, signs were mounted on the fascia. Additionally, what was historically a window should stay a window, since it could impact the interior space. Ms. Cowden stated that putting the sign over a transom would conflict with the guidelines.

Urban Conservator Forwood asked for clarification from the Board of their definition of an internally illuminated standardized sign, since staff had recently received several sign applications. Mr. Kreider stated that the intent of the guidelines is to prohibit signs that have brand names, which are advertising a product that could be purchased anywhere. They do not prohibit business identification signs. The Board concluded that they would like to review all sign applications on a case-by-case basis.

**BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Kreider, second by Sullebarger) to approve the sign with the condition that the width relate to the vertical divisions of the structure, finding that it is not a standardized, internally illuminated sign as referenced in the Main Street Historic District Guidelines because it identifies the business.

**CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS AND ZONING VARIANCES, 2139  
AUBURN AVENUE, AUBURN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report on this request for a Certificate of Appropriateness and Institutional-Residential (I-R) modifications for new signage at

2139 Auburn Avenue (Christ Hospital). A portion of Christ Hospital's front property (230' back from Auburn Avenue) and is located within the Auburn Avenue Historic District. Christ Hospital is also within an I-R zoning district.

Christ Hospital is proposing to replace six freestanding signs with four new freestanding signs: one institution identification sign and three instructional signs. Ms. Kellam stated that each of the proposed signs would exceed the size restrictions stipulated in the I-R regulations. The new identification sign is 96 s.f. more than the 72 s.f. allowed by the Zoning Code and the largest letter measures 1'-2" tall, which is 4" taller than allowed. The new instructional signs will exceed the 12 s.f. allowed by more than 80 s.f.

Ms. Kellam explained that the historic district guidelines regarding signage are not stringent; they emphasize clarity, simplicity and contemporary design compatible with structures in the district. Ms. Kellam pointed out that the reduction in the number of signs would help reduce clutter, even though the signs are larger. The proposed signage is designed with clarity and legibility and will complement the contemporary structures within the complex.

Sally Land, with United Signs, Inc.; Janna Smith, of Swath Design; and Rick Perkinson from Christ Hospital, were present to address the Board.

Ms. Smith stated that they had considered utilizing the existing signposts, but the posts were too narrow for the signs to accommodate all of the necessary information. (A letter height of 4" is needed for the words to be read a distance of 200'.) Therefore, they decided to remove the existing signs and construct new ones in more appropriate locations. They raised the height of the identity sign and based its colors on the new identity colors of the Health Alliance. The categories of the instructional signs have distinct colors, with the most important, red "Emergency" on top. In response to Ms. Sullebarger, Ms. Smith said that with the reduction in number of signs, the total square footage of the proposed signage would be about equal to that of the existing signage.

Ms. Land pointed out the importance of the new instructional signs since they would provide direction to the newly relocated emergency entrance and the new Heart Center. Ms. Land described details of the high traffic volume and expressed the need for signage to be placed in key locations to prompt visitors along the 700' frontage. Ms. Land also provided photographs of signage at other local hospitals.

Urban Conservator Forwood clarified that in approving a modification to the I-R regulations, the Board would not be modifying the guidelines, but granting a modification to the plan for the area and height of the sign. Mr. Kreider added that it would be similar to the Board granting a variance.

Mr. Senhauser commented that the white lettering did not provide enough contrast and the multicolor backgrounds made the signs difficult to read. He suggested reducing the number of colors by retaining the blue and white identity on the top band, over the "Emergency" red band, with a single background color for the remainder of the sign. He also questioned the use of a stainless steel sign for the Heart Center, although he realized it was not a part of this application.

[Mr. Kirk entered the meeting.]

Ms. Smith replied that the signs needed to accommodate twice the amount of information since there are now two entrances. They had originally considered using a uniform blue

background (with a red band for "Emergency"); however, the information became confused. The use of multicolor was to differentiate the type of information, by separating it into categories by content and establishing a hierarchy.

Mr. Kreider agreed that the use of color could facilitate comprehension and remarked that given the institutional nature, the use of multicolor was warranted.

**BOARD ACTION**

The Board voted unanimously (motion by Sullebarger, second by Kreider) to take the following actions:

1. Grant a modification to the I-R Plan to allow the height of the letters and the square footage of the new signs as proposed, finding that such relief from the literal implication of the Zoning Code:
  - a. Is necessary and appropriate in the interest of historic conservation so as not to adversely affect the historic architectural or aesthetic integrity of the district; and
  - c. Will not be materially detrimental to the public health, safety, and welfare or injurious to the property in the district or vicinity where the property is located; and
2. Approve a Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed new signs as per plans submitted.

**PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, 204 AND 208 MULBERRY STREET, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Staff member Caroline Kellam presented the staff report for the preliminary design review of two new buildings on vacant lots at 204 and 208 Mulberry Street within the Over-the-Rhine Historic District. There is an existing building between these two parcels at 206 Mulberry. Each building will have two condominium units, one facing Mulberry Street and the other facing Seitz Street with a common wall between the units.

Ms. Kellam stated that side yard setback variances would be required to comply with the Zoning Code. If the applicant decides to subdivide the lots, additional rear yard and lot size variances would be necessary.

The buildings are to be wood frame construction on a concrete foundation with brick veneer on the street elevations, vinyl siding on the side and rear elevations, and asphalt roof shingles. The applicant proposes to have vinyl 6/6 sash windows, but has indicated he is open to aluminum, aluminum clad, or wood. There will be a wood entry door and front facing metal garage doors.

Ms. Kellam pointed out that there is a noticeable lack of verticality with the design, particularly with the windows. Staff also questioned the use of stucco and vinyl siding, the lack of lintels and transoms, the smooth finish on the concrete foundation, the six-panel colonial style door, and the absence of a front stoop, all of which are out of character with the district. She also suggested it may be appropriate to simplify the windows to 1/1 or 2/2.

The architect Bernard Fields was present to respond to questions from the Board. Mr. Fields explained that his primary concern was with zoning. He indicated he was open to

any recommendations and would make modifications to the design to conform to the guidelines. Mr. Fields stated that he might be changing the design to include a deck. In response to Ms. Wallace, he stated that the owner would likely sell the separate units. Mr. Fields indicated the owner was hesitant to spend a great deal of money finishing the side of the building since there is only 6" to the adjacent vacant lot, which they anticipate will be developed.

The Board agreed that the use of stucco for the side elevations would require minimal maintenance and was compatible with the district. Mr. Senhauser stated that variances are not an issue since granting them will reestablish the fabric of the neighborhood. The construction is being done with respect to the current property subdivision and the size and scale are compatible with the district.

The Board suggested considering modifications to the design that would give the building more verticality. Mr. Senhauser observed that the units facing on Seitz are more horizontal than is typical of the district. In addition, it would be more appropriate to expand the vertical proportions of the double hung windows to be as much as 7' high x 3' wide. Ms. Sullebarger pointed out that the structure at 206 Mulberry is a good model in the district with a higher floor to ceiling height and windows taller than they are wide. Mr. Kirk recommended a shed roof and articulating the cornices to emphasize verticality. He also pointed out that including lintels over the garage door and windows and a transom over the entrance door would help break up the horizontal look.

The Board recommended additional items for consideration. Mr. Raser remarked that Pypon is very durable and could be used for cornices, but did not think it should be used for lintels, noting that a soldiered brick as a header over the window would be comparable in cost. He also suggested eliminating the large gable and including a third floor, which would not only increase the sale price, but also add to the aesthetics of the building. The Board pointed out that consideration should be given to the profile of the vinyl windows, a carriage style garage door, and stucco instead of vinyl siding. In addition, adding a step would enhance privacy and add to the height of the building.

### **BOARD ACTION**

Because this was a preliminary design review, no action was required by the Board.

[Ms. Sullebarger left the meeting.]

### **PRELIMINARY DESIGN REVIEW, CENTRAL PARKWAY BETWEEN ELM AND RACE STREETS, OVER-THE-RHINE HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Ron Edgerton, the Project Manager for KZF architects, related the numerous individuals involved with the design of the new Washington Park School. He introduced project designer Jim Chang and stated that two Columbus area firms experienced in school design were also involved. Mr. Edgerton introduced other team members who were in attendance: Michael Burson, CPS Director of Facilities; Robin Grandin, CPS Project Manager; and Russ Alford, Senior Project Manager with Turner/DAG, the development partner. He said the School Planning Team also included the principal and staff of the Washington Park School, representatives from the Children's Defense Fund and parents. They have also met on a regular basis with the Ohio School Facilities Commission, who provided input on state requirements. The preliminary design of the project has been well received by the Over-the-Rhine Community Council.

Mr. Edgerton explained that the new school would replace the old Washington Park School, which is to be used as transition space while other district schools are being renovated. They are still exploring options as to how the present school would ultimately be used. The new facility will occupy most of the entire block from 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Race and Elm Streets, and Central Parkway. CPS will be acquiring the parking lot property, as well as the northeast corner buildings to meet the state's minimum area requirements. There are no plans to acquire the ancillary facilities of the Drop Inn Center.

Mr. Edgerton said that the location of the site allows them the opportunity to embrace the character of a downtown environment at the edge of the historic district. He stated they sited the building to accommodate the majority of children walking to school, primarily from the north and east. They had joint meetings to address access with the City's Department of Transportation and Engineering and CPS. A surface parking lot and delivery area will be accessed from Elm Street, with an egress onto 12th Street. Pick-up and drop-off for 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades will occur along Race Street; the required separate pre-K and K pick-up and drop-off will be on Central Parkway. Designated bus parking or temporary loading/unloading will be on the south and west sides.

The block at Central Parkway and Race is a three-story classroom building. There are four classrooms grouped around an extended learning area. The block will be brick with a stone-like base and a thick receding cornice. The fenestration and decorative strategy is fairly abstract with a variety of windows playing against a uniform lintel grid.

West of the classroom block is a public block for larger uses, including administration on the first floor, the cafeteria, and the kindergarten and pre-school area. The upper area houses the gymnasium, the upper volume of the cafeteria, and the media center/library area. The first floor base will be brick; the large volume upper floors will have metal siding with repetitive vertical windows intended to reflect its institutional and public uses. The classroom and public blocks are joined by a transparent link through which Washington Park and the open areas to the north may be seen from Central Parkway.

Mr. Chang stated that by placing the facility along Central Parkway, they would reinforce the parkway's large-scale urban face and provide a formal presentation to the City. He said that the north elevation, as seen from 12<sup>th</sup> Street and Washington Park, belongs more to the neighborhood. It is smaller in scale and its curvilinear form reflects the organic, softness of Washington Park.

Mr. Raser commented that in their attempt to distance the facility and students from the Drop Inn Center by the location of the parking area, they are actually engaging it. He suggested that locating the building on 12<sup>th</sup> Street would better disassociate it from the Drop Inn Center.

Ms. Wallace stated they could consider alternate entries into the building since there is no direct entry near the bus drop-off.

Mr. Senhauser suggested that they pull the building up to the sidewalk. He expressed concern that the landscaped area has a suburban appearance and would likely be filled with weeds and ultimately covered with asphalt. He pointed out that the extra 10' to 15' would allow for more parking and open space to the north and west. Mr. Edgerton replied that significant cost constraints would not allow them to move the building any closer to the street. Mr. Alford explained that he would have to obtain permits to build scaffolding and that additional space would be required for staging for the masonry work.

In addition, they allowed 8' to 10' of space secured by ornamental fencing to allow the students to walk around the facility to the play area. Mr. Kirk added that the utilities under Central Parkway make it almost impossible to introduce trees. Mr. Senhauser suggested that they extend the concrete sidewalk to the building as shown in the renderings.

[Mr. Kreider left the meeting]

Mr. Senhauser remarked that the design takes on a front yard/back yard appearance and that consideration could be given to strengthen the north elevation. Mr. Chang acknowledged that the north side would be like a front porch for children because they will enter there for breakfast. Mr. Senhauser added that landscaping would be critical because they need to front an urban park without being too contrived. Mr. Chang considered incorporating elements from Findlay Market in anticipation of reopening the view corridor presently blocked by the Washington Park School.

The Board discussed the playground areas, noting that a large play area is not typical of an older urban school. Mr. Burson pointed out that minimum state requirements are greater than what is being provided on this site. Mr. Chang asked if the Board could provide recommendations as to fencing, since the state requires that they have a 6' chain link fence surrounding playgrounds. Board members varied in response from using natural buffering to soften the environment, to using a wall or fence to emphasize the urban setting. Mr. Chang noted that birthing would take up additional real estate. He added that if they used chain link, it would be vinyl coated. Mr. Alford noted that in the past, the state has agreed to the use of a more decorative material. Mr. Burson added that in considering the Over-the-Rhine Comprehensive Plan, they had hoped to create a more structured play area, in anticipation that it would also be used by the neighborhood.

The Board pointed out that the two buildings located on the northeast corner of Race Street, are contributing buildings to the district. Realizing that they could not obtain their objective with the buildings remaining, Mr. Senhauser stated that a case could be made for an allowable loss, justifying it in terms of the greater good of the project.

### **BOARD ACTION**

Because this was a preliminary design review, no action was required by the Board.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

As there were no other items for consideration by the Board, the meeting adjourned.

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William L. Forwood  
Urban Conservator

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John C. Senhauser  
Chairman

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Date